English 108E: Women in Literature  
Winter 1994, Thursdays 3:30-6:30

Instructor: Alice den Otter, HH 228D, ext. 3886
Office Hours: Thursdays 6:30-8:00, or by appointment


Course Description:

In this course, we will explore various presentations and representations of women in English literature from medieval to post-modern times. We will consider writings by both men and women since a creative work by an individual author is shaped by his/her literary past and cultural present--neither of which is limited to just one gender. We will particularly be interested in the development of, rhetorical motivations for, and subversion of gender images, including stereotypes such as witch, saint, sex object, or amazon. To help us celebrate the achievements of women in literature rather than focus on victimage, we will approach the course through themes of beauty and wonder, opening ourselves to the rhythms of reason and passion, endurance and revolution, silence and creativity. To see what may not always be obvious, we will need to use critical and imaginative thinking, using our own personal voices, cultures, and experiences.

Evaluation:

Participation (Attendance, Discussion, In-Class Assignments) 10%
Take-home Mid-term Exam (essay form, assigned Feb.10, due Feb. 17) 30%
Essay (8-10 double-spaced pages, due Mar.17) 30%
Final Exam 30%

Note: Absences and late assignments without prior approval or justified reasons will be penalized 10% a week.
Course Schedule

January 6  Women in Literature: In Praise of the Strangely Beautiful: Introduction to the course; overview of themes; presentation of Course Readings.


February 10
(Augustan
1700-1800)

The In-Valid: Designed for Peace and Soft Delight: Duck,
"The Thresher's Labour," pp.576-577; Collier, from The
693; *Blake, "Nurse's Song (1)," p.721, "Nurse's Song (E)," p.724, "The Mental Traveller," pp.728-729; *Wollstonecraft,

February 17
(Romantic
1800-1830)

Rose," p.733, "Highland Mary," p.733; *W.Wordsworth,
"Beauteous Evening," p.765, "I Wandered Lonely," pp.769-769,

February 24

READING WEEK: ENJOY YOUR BOOKS!

March 3
(Victorian
1830-1860)

The Woven Text: Drizzle of Strange Meaning: Hood, "Song
Martineau, "Political Non-existence of Women," p.894-897;
*Moodie, from Roughing it in the Bush, pp.919-923; *Atwood,
"Journals of Susannah Moodie," pp.1500-1501; Poe, "Annabel
Lee," p.941; *Tennyson, "Lady of Shalott," pp.957-959;
Browning, "My Last Duchess," p.1001; Kingsley, "Three
March 10
(1850-1900)


March 17
(1900-1920)

*The Lady in the Looking-Glass: Lingering and Pausing:*

March 24
(1920-1990)

*Woman Untitled: Delicate Lust and Exquisite Boredom:*

March 31
(1920-1990)